# Trust Instrument

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# Trust Instrument

by Bordementions

Summary

A master learns that not everyone is deserving of trust, not even your own servants

Notes

This is a two part thing I'll post the other one tomorrow I'm just tired of editing today. I really do like a lot of the fate characters/ servants and I want to write a lot more oif them its just like the base amount of research required so I don't look like a fucking moron is a ton per character and for the settings lol

Like I'm really trying to read some of the mangas and look into starting some of the games so I can learn more but it's defo gonna take a while, so if shit is ooc or smth then whatever its a learning process

I think I did fairly alright with Jalter here and I also reallllly like her like a lot she should beat the shit out of me and touch me innapropriately me thinks but ANYWAYS

The second part will be a lot better I think but this is just like some set up for it roughly 8k or so

But like so many of the servants are really hot and I want them to get freaky with them expiditiously HAHHAAHHHHAA

https://discord.gg/KjnFJ6HG6a

See the end of the work for more notes

# Chapter 1

The temporary Chaldean encampment you and the others had set up had finally found the time to settle into something resembling some semblance of quiet.

For once, there was no battle raging beyond the horizon, no last-minute strategy meetings stretching deep into the nigh. Unlike most of the other Singularities, things here weren't an immediate bloodbath that required everyone to be on edge at every waking moment.

The sounds that drifted through the old stone manor the group had appropriated as a headquarters were nothing more than mundane comforts—Servants talking quietly among themselves, boots crossing worn wooden floors, and distant, lighthearted laughter echoing from somewhere downstairs.

It was the most peace you had experienced in a long time.

You sat alone near one of the tall, arched windows overlooking the terrain beyond. The world sprawled beneath a heavy gray afternoon sky, rolling fields broken up by patches of dark, dense forest and a few distant, quiet villages. It was a deceptively calm sight, though by now, you knew better than anyone how dangerous that illusion could be. Human history was never truly peaceful.

Your fingers rested against the edge of a weathered wooden table while your thoughts wandered. Even when you had nothing to do physically, a Master’s mind never truly rested. You had a great deal to think about—about Chaldea, about survival, about your Servants, and about... her.

Jeanne d’Arc Alter.

You couldn't help but glance toward the heavy wooden doorway of the study. Even now, after everything the two of you had endured together, just thinking about her brought a faint, involuntary smile to your face. Not that you would ever admit that aloud. Especially not anywhere she could hear it.

The first time you had summoned her, she had nearly set half the room on fire. Several times, in fact. She had threatened your life repeatedly, ignored your orders, insulted everyone around her, picked fights she didn't need to pick, and somehow managed to turn every

single conversation into an argument. She was a chaotic evil clone who insisted she was nothing but a weapon of pure retribution.

And yet... there were times when you had also seen her laugh. You had seen her protect people she claimed to despise, and you had seen her throw herself into danger without a second thought. You had seen glimpses of someone beneath all the smoke and hatred—someone who wasn't simply the mindless monster she claimed to be, the version of herself she desperately insisted she had to be. After spending so much time fighting together, bonding, and trying to help her navigate a world she was taught to hate, you genuinely believed she was capable of change. There was more to her than the pre-programmed malice she had been created with.

You leaned back in your chair, staring up at the stone ceiling. "...You deserve better," the words escaped your lips before you could stop them, whispering into the quiet, empty room.

Your eyes drifted toward the small collection of items resting atop the table nearby. They were small fragments and remnants—shards of Holy Grails you had recovered from previous Singularities. Enough residual magical energy remained within them to accomplish something extraordinary, a project that had occupied your thoughts for weeks, maybe months.

Most Servants accepted their contracts, or simply didn't care about the nature of their summoning. But Jalter? She hated it. She had never hidden that fact. You could practically hear her venomous voice ringing in your ears right now: “What? You think I'm some kind of obedient familiar or something? Don't order me around! The only reason I listen to you is because it benefits me.”

It was always there. That deep-seated resentment, that intense discomfort of being bound. Perhaps because she herself had been created for someone else's purpose, given life entirely by another's wish. You couldn't change her past, but maybe, just maybe, you could give her something she had never truly possessed: a choice. A real one.

You looked down at your hand. The magical circuits beneath your skin pulsed faintly, connecting you to the web of Servants under your command. You had spent weeks studying whatever leftover energy you could dredge up from those grail pieces, testing near-tirelessly to find a code, a spell, a loophole. You had gone so far as to consult with Da Vinci in secret. Even the resident genius had looked surprised.

“You want to remove the contract entirely?” Da Vinci had asked, tilting her head. You remembered nodding firmly, met by the completely bewildered look she gave you afterward. “That's a... dangerous gamble, Master. She could leave us, and you'd have no idea what she would be up to. What if she decides to attack Chaldea? We do not currently possess the manpower to reliably deal with her should she turn against us.”

“...I'm honestly not really sure,” you had admitted truthfully. It was obviously something you had considered at length, but you never came to a conventional, safe answer. You just had to trust the girl you had seen beneath the armor.

Da Vinci had stared at you for several seconds, then let out a soft smile. “You're a strange Master.”

Perhaps you were. But if you wanted Jeanne to trust you, then eventually, you had to trust her first. Not as a Servant, and certainly not as a weapon, but as a person. Your decision had been made; the only thing left was finding the right moment to present it.

The opportunity presented itself later that evening.

The manor's upper floors were largely abandoned at this hour. Most of the Chaldean staff and Servants were downstairs, eating, resting, or keeping guard. You found Jeanne standing alone on one of the high stone balconies overlooking the courtyard. Of course she was away from the crowd.

The cold evening wind pulled sharply at the massive black cape hanging from her shoulders, the dark fur lining around her collar shifting softly against her pale skin. One large, black gauntlet rested heavily against the stone railing, her other arm hanging loose at her side. Her white-blond hair danced wildly in the breeze, her sharp eyes focused intently on the distant, dark horizon. She hadn't noticed your approach, or perhaps she had and chose to ignore it.

You approached quietly, stopping a few steps away. You didn't want to intrude upon her beloved personal space without at least making yourself known first. Even then, she didn't turn to face you.

"Tch." There it was. Her signature click of the tongue. "You're getting loud."

You smiled to yourself, crossing your arms against the chill. "I didn't say anything yet."

"You were thinking loudly," she snapped back, clearly intent on sticking some kind of accusation onto you just to justify her annoyance.

"That's not physically possible."

"It is when you're being annoying."

At that, you couldn't help it. An audible snicker escaped your mouth, muffled behind your hand. The sound finally earned you a direct glance. Her intense golden eyes narrowed immediately, her hostile gaze locking onto you.

"...Why are you smiling?" she demanded, though she tried desperately to put off the appearance that she couldn't care less about the answer.

You shrugged, leaning against the railing a safe distance away. "No reason."

"That's suspicious." She tore her gaze away from you, clutching the stone railing a little tighter. "Go bother someone else."

You remained exactly where you were. The silence between you stretched out, lengthening until it grew almost awkward under the starry sky.

Eventually, she let out a dramatic, irritated sigh. "...You're not leaving, are you?"

You shook your head. "No."

"Wonderful." The word dripped with heavy sarcasm. She cleared her throat stiffly. "Ahem. I think that's just wonderful."

You couldn't help but smile again.

Jalter shot you another glare. "Stop that."

"What?"

"That." She gestured vaguely and aggressively toward your face. "The stupid smile."

"It isn't stupid."

"It absolutely is."

She clicked her tongue again, turning her face back toward the wind. "...Idiot."

Yet, despite the insults and the sharp edges, she made no effort to leave, nor did she spark any flames to chase you away. That alone spoke volumes about how far the two of you had come. The wind passed between you both, and several moments slipped by. They were comfortable moments. Unexpectedly peaceful.

Eventually, you broke the quiet. "Jeanne."

"Hm?"

"I wanted to thank you."

Her face immediately twisted into a grimace. "Oh, no."

"What?" you blinked.

"I hate whenever conversations start like that."

"Why?"

"Because it means you're about to say something incredibly embarrassing."

"I wasn't going to say anything embarrassing."

"You absolutely were." Her eyes narrowed suspiciously, scanning your face. "You've got that look."

"What look?"

"The emotional one."

You laughed despite yourself, the sound echoing in the night air. Jeanne groaned loudly, throwing her head back. "God, this is already awful."

"Just listen to me."

"Do I have to?"

"Yes."

"Tch." She crossed her arms tightly over her chest. "Fine." The gesture, however, looked far more defensive than it did hostile. She was

bracing herself.

You took a slow breath, letting the cool air steady your nerves, and spoke from the heart. "Thank you. For everything."

Her defensive expression froze directly where it was at, even losing a bit of it's grimace.

"All the battles," you continued, meeting her gaze squarely. "The Singularities. Chaldea. The people you've protected, even when you claimed you didn't care. The times you've saved my life." You smiled softly. "We wouldn't have gotten this far without you, Jeanne."

Jeanne just stared at you. She was completely, utterly silent, which was unusual. In fact, it was practically unprecedented.

"I know you don't like hearing things like this. I know you don't think much of humanity, and I know you probably hate being thanked," you said as her eyes shifted away, refusing to maintain contact. You pressed on anyway. "But I mean it. Sincerely."

The wind stirred the tattered edges of her cape. For several seconds, neither of you spoke.

Then, she finally broke. "...You're being weird."

There she was.

You laughed, the tension breaking. Jeanne immediately pointed an accusing, armored finger right at your face. "See?! Look at you!"

"I'm serious!"

"That's what makes it weird!" She looked visibly uncomfortable now, her posture stiffening as a faint, unmistakable flush began creeping onto her pale cheeks. She looked absolutely furious that her body was betraying her like that. She was flustered, and it was admittedly adorable—though you didn't mention it as you didn't want to be immolated on the spot.

"I don't need gratitude," she muttered, facing away entirely, her voice growing unusually quiet. "Besides, I was already fighting. You just happened to be standing there."

You smiled, matching her tone. "Still."

"Tch." The flush on her face deepened. "You're unbelievably sappy. It's

disgusting."

"Sorry."

"No, you're not." She sighed heavily, the heat leaving her voice as she looked back toward you, her expression turning serious. "What exactly is this about, anyway? You didn't come all the way up here just to make me miserable with human sentiment."

You hesitated, just briefly, feeling the weight of the grail shards resting in your pocket. Then, your expression also hardened.

"A reward."

Jeanne blinked, her sharp eyes widening. "...A what?"

"A reward."

The confusion on her face deepened, her brow furrowing. For perhaps the first time since you had summoned her, she looked genuinely, utterly lost. "What are you talking about?"

"You've done a lot for me, and for Chaldea."

"So?"

"So, I wanted to give you something in return."

Her eyes narrowed instantly, the confusion twisting into sudden, guarded skepticism. "Oh."

"What?" you asked.

"I get it."

"You do?"

"Obviously." She pointed at you again, a smug, knowing smirk tugging at the corner of her lips to hide her lingering embarrassment. "This is one of those human emotional bonding tactics. A gift to make me feel bad so I follow orders better."

"...Maybe a little," you teased softly.

"I knew it." She groaned, rolling her eyes. "You people are entirely impossible."

Despite her relentless complaints, her posture shifted. Her eyes now glittering with an unmistakable, guarded curiosity. "What is it?" she demanded, her voice low.

You took a decisive step forward, closing the distance between you. "Give me your hand."

The reaction was immediate. "...Excuse me?"

"Your hand," you repeated softly, holding your own palm out between you.

"…Why?"

The question came far too quickly, breathless and uncharacteristically fragile. Her eyes darted away to the floor, then back to your face, then away again, completely unable to settle. That faint burning redness bleeding further into her unusually pale cheeks.

You blinked, caught off guard by the sheer vulnerability of the sight. "...Jeanne?"

"What?" she snapped, her voice tightening.

"You look nervous."

"I do not!"

"You do."

"I don't."

"You really do."

"I'M NOT!"

The explosive denial was so unbelievably loud, which only served to confirm your suspicions.

Realizing she had walked right into your trap, Jeanne immediately ripped her face away, her chin dipping into the black fur lining of her collar. "...Shut up."

You tried very hard not to say anything, biting your lip so hard it throbbed, but a muffled sound escaped you anyway. She shot you a look that was entirely murderous, her yellow eyes blazing with a mix of fury and intense humiliation.

Eventually, realizing you weren't going to back down, she thrust one armored hand toward you with violent, jerky suddenness. "There!" the word came out almost violent. "Take it!"

You reached out, your fingers gently wrapping around her hand. Her large gauntlet was cool beneath your touch, the segmented plates angular and sharp. For a brief moment, she stiffened completely, her breath hitching, before she forced herself to go perfectly still.

"...Now what?" she muttered, staring down at your joined hands.

You looked up at her—really looked at her. You looked at the woman who had fought beside you through a dozen living hells, the woman who bitterly insisted she was nothing more than an echo of hatred, and the woman who deep down believed that no one would ever choose her, trust her, or care about her existence.

You smiled, your heart swelling with a strange, fierce warmth. "Thank you, Jeanne."

Her expression softened slightly. Only for a fraction of a second, but it was there.

Then, you released the spell.

The fragments of Holy Grail mana you had spent weeks converting, hidden deep within your magical circuits, suddenly ignited. A blinding, pure golden light erupted from the space between your joined hands.

Jeanne's eyes widened into dinner plates. "Wha—"

The balcony beneath your feet trembled violently. Ancient, high-grade magecraft surged outward in a crushing wave, a vast network of glowing, intricate magi symbols spreading across the stone floor like a web of fire.

Jeanne immediately tried to violently rip her hand away, but her movements stopped entirely because she felt it. The contract between you. The invisible, immutable tether tying her soul to yours as a Servant—it was changing, dissolving.

Her breathing turned frantic. "What are you doing?!"

On the back of your hand, the crimson Command Seals began to burn with a blinding, agonizing heat. Cracks of jagged white and red light

fractured across the stigmata, spider-webbing over your skin. Jeanne stared down at your hand, utter, unadulterated disbelief washing over her fierce features.

"What are you—"

Your smile never faltered, even as the magical feedback stung your veins.

With a sound like shattering glass, the final strand broke. It felt like heavy chains snapping, like a iron prison door being blasted off its hinges.

The residual mana surged violently around Jeanne, her cape whipping wildly in the artificial gale. And then once more—silence.

The suffocating magical pressure vanished into the night air as quickly as it had come. Gone.

Jeanne stood frozen, perfectly still, the wind dying down around her. Her eyes slowly lowered toward her own hands, then drifted toward you, and finally toward the spiritual space where the contract had existed just moments prior. There was nothing. No command seals pulsing in her mind. No lingering authority. No restrictions, no obligations, and no Master. The chains were entirely gone.

For the first time since her fictional birth... Jeanne d'Arc Alter belonged entirely to herself.

Suddenly, her hand ripped itself from your grasp with an abruptness that nearly startled you backward.

"What...?" The word left her lips as little more than a phantom breath.

Jeanne turned her full attention to her hand, her fingers flexing once, twice, testing the joints. Her gaze darted across the black metal as if she expected to find some hidden brand or trap burned into her spirit. But there was nothing.

Her expression darkened, her brow furrowing deeply. "No."

She looked down at herself, the gears visibly grinding in her head. The mana sustaining her physical form was still perfectly intact, fueled by the Grail remnants you had anchored to her independent manifestation. But the leash was gone. No hidden strings. No emergency override.

Her eyes narrowed to dangerous slits, snapping back to your face with terrifying intensity. "What did you do?"

You blinked, trying to maintain your composure. "I told you. I wanted to give you—"

"No!" Her voice cut through yours like a blade. "What did you actually do?"

The suspicion in her gaze was immediate, primal, and deeply instinctive. Years of manufactured resentment and deep-seated distrust reared their ugly heads all at once. She took a heavy, step forward, crowding your space.

"You don't just do something like this," she hissed, her eyes digging into yours, trying to scrape away the surface to find the lie. She was searching for the hidden motive, the trick, the catch hidden beneath the surface—some cruel condition or a new chain disguised as a mercy.

Because that was how humanity worked. That was how the world worked. Nobody gave something this valuable away for free. Nobody. Especially not to an accursed, manufactured witch.

For several agonizingly long moments, she simply stared, waiting for you to crack, waiting for the punchline. Yet, as the seconds ticked by into silence, the rigid suspicion in her face began to fracture. It didn't disappear, but it weakened, giving way to a profound, jarring confusion.

Because she couldn't find the lie. She couldn't find the manipulation or the selfish desire. You simply stood there looking tired, slightly bruised by the mana flare, and remarkably happy. You looked as if you had just achieved something wonderful, rather than handing absolute freedom to one of the most volatile, destructive people in existance.

The weight of the reality slowly settled across Jeanne's face, and inexplicably, that realization seemed to disturb her more than anything else. "...You're serious."

You tilted your head, your voice soft. "Of course I am. You always hated being bound to someone. You talked about it all the time." You offered her a small, tentative smile. "I thought... I thought maybe this would make you happy."

Something shifted behind those sharp golden eyes. For a brief moment, Jeanne looked genuinely, utterly incapable of processing the words entering her ears.

Then... slowly. Very slowly.

The corners of her mouth began to tilt upward. It wasn't the petty smirk she wore when she won an argument, nor was it the smug, chaotic grin she flashed when she set something on fire. This smile was different. It stretched wider, sharper, and far, far less reassuring.

An involuntary chill crawled straight down your spine. "...Jeanne?"

Her shoulders began to shake. At first, you thought she was trembling with rage, but then a sound broke the quiet—a laugh. It was soft, quiet, and completely disbelieving. "Heh..."

The sound bubbled up, growing louder. "Hah..."

Then louder still, echoing off the stone walls. "Hahahaha…"

Her head lowered slightly, strands of messy, pale blond hair falling over her face as the laughter spilled across the balcony. "Hahahahahaha…"

You felt your stomach tighten into a hard knot, a cold sweat breaking out on the back of your neck as you tried to call out to her again. "Jeanne?"

She raised a hand to wipe at the corner of one eye, still chuckling. "Oh, this is rich. This is genuinely rich."

You frowned, taking a half-step back. "What?"

Jeanne slowly looked up, the sharp, knife-like smile firmly in place. Her eyes glittered like coins in the fading twilight. "I suppose I should thank you."

You blinked, entirely out of your depth.

"You heard me," she said, the terrifyingly wide smile never wavering. "For what you've done." Her gaze briefly drifted down to her fingers again, flexing them one more time to test the reality of her newfound autonomy. When her eyes snapped back to yours, the smile softened just a fraction. "And truthfully... I am thankful."

The admission sounded almost painful, like she had to drag the words

out from the deepest, most heavily guarded cavern of her soul. Yet, they were real. You could tell. Which made what she said next all the more unsettling.

"But," her smile snapped right back into a razor-sharp grin, "you are unbelievably stupid."

You blinked, your jaw dropping slightly. "...Excuse me?"

"I mean it!" She let out a low, deeply amused chuckle. "You are so profoundly stupid it almost loops back around into being impressive."

"Jeanne—"

"No, really!" She pointed an accusing finger directly at your chest. "What kind of idiot does this?"

"I thought—"

"Exactly! You thought," she cut you off instantly, her voice dripping with mocking amusement.

The sheer confidence in her tone made your chest tighten, your hard-earned certainty faltering. A cold, heavy feeling of dread settled in your stomach, growing larger by the second. You couldn't even explain why you were suddenly terrified. You had mentally prepared for a lot of reactions—outrage, confusion, maybe even a rare tearful moment of gratitude. You had not prepared for whatever predatory amusement was currently staring you down.

Her eyes gleamed. "Oh?"

You swallowed hard, your throat suddenly dry. "What do you mean by that?" The question sounded far weaker than you had intended.

Jeanne stepped closer, her armor clinking softly. "You trusted me."

"...Yes."

"You trusted me completely. You removed every single method of controlling me, gave me absolute freedom, and you expected this to be some touching, emotional moment." Another sharp laugh escaped her. "And you didn't think for a single second about the consequences."

The feeling in your chest spiked. Something about the way she was looking at you—like a wolf evaluating a particularly baffling sheep—made every single survival instinct in your human body scream.

You took another deliberate step backward, trying to make some kind of space between you.

Jeanne looking right at you noticed, of course. For a moment, she simply watched your retreat, and then, completely unexpectedly, she rolled her eyes and groaned. "Oh, stop that."

You paused, confused. "I don't…"

"That look. The frightened, trembling terror." She sounded thoroughly annoyed now. "As if I'm about to incinerate you on the spot."

The response did absolutely nothing to calm your racing pulse.

Jeanne sighed dramatically, waving a dismissive, armored hand through the air. "Relax."

You didn't move an inch, entirely unconvinced.

Jeanne clicked her tongue in frustration. "Honestly."

She stepped forward again, closing the distance you had just tried to create. Her cape billowed behind her in the rising night wind, and her eyes locked onto yours. Despite the lingering, dangerous smirk on her lips, the playful mockery vanished from her eyes, replaced by something undeniably serious.

"Don't be scared," she said, her voice surprisingly calm, almost grounding. "What you just did for me..." Her eyes shifted away for a split second, a rare break in her armor. "...is more than enough reason to spare your life."

Spare your life. The choice of words did absolutely nothing to help your anxiety. Jeanne seemed entirely oblivious to this, or more likely, she simply found your discomfort hilarious.

She folded her arms tightly. "Hmph." A quiet chuckle escaped her nose. "Besides..."

Her gaze crawled back to you, slowly tracing over the lines of your face, studying you, evaluating you with an intensity that felt entirely new, as if she were seeing you clearly for the very first time.

"...that ridiculously optimistic personality of yours."

Your stomach sank.

"The part of you that stubbornly thinks everyone can be saved," she murmured, her voice dropping an octave.

"Jeanne—"

"The part of you that foolishly believes trust solves everything. The part of you," she took another step, her chestplate nearly brushing against your chest, "that looks at monsters and somehow convinces yourself that they're just misunderstood people."

Something about the raw, unfiltered gravity in her voice made your breath catch. She was close enough now that you could smell the faint, underlying scent of smoke that always followed her, close enough to see the amber fire dancing deep within her pupils.

"Honestly," she whispered, shaking her head with a mix of disdain and something dangerously close to fascination. "You are sickeningly optimistic, and unbelievably, terribly childish."

You opened your mouth to defend yourself, but Jeanne didn't give you the chance.

"But don't you worry," she purred, the words sounding far too pleased, far too utterly possessive. Her eyes narrowed into crescents as she looked down at you. "I fully plan to remedy that."

The dread in your stomach intensified, heavy and warm, as she stood there over you, looking as if she suddenly had all the time in the world—and all the freedom to use it exactly how she pleased.

# Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

> It’s hard to bear the consequences of your actions, isn’t it?

Chapter Notes

> Finishing off the jalter stuff arararar I love this thing and I want to pick it up and squeeze it and swing it around before it caves my skull in and burns my corpse but it’s okay cause jalter is hot

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The end of the world had not arrived in a single, cinematic flash of light. There had been no definitive moment where reality simply fractured and took to armageddon.

No, the worst part of it was how agonizingly gradual the descent had been.

At first, there had been hope. A foolish, desperate kind of hope that Jeanne would eventually calm down. You had clung to the belief that she would listen to reason, that whatever dark, twisted mood had overcome her on that stone balcony would pass like a bad dream. After all, this was Jeanne. The same Jeanne who complained endlessly about trivial things, who threatened the lives of people she secretly cared about, and who bitterly insisted she hated humanity while constantly throwing herself into harm's way to save others. Surely, there was still a limit to her malice. Surely, there was a line she would not cross.

You had been wrong. Terribly, awfully wrong.

The first city burned just three days after the contract had been terminated. Then another fell, and another, until thousands of settlements across the Singularity were reduced to ash. By the second week, the skies themselves seemed permanently stained a looming, suffocating black. By the third week, the static from Chaldea’s communication went completely dead. No more messages. No more clever interventions from Da Vinci. No reinforcements.

Nothing.

The Singularity had become completely isolated, and Jeanne had made certain it stayed that way. Great winged monsters—entire flocks of dragons—now filled the skies, blotting out the sun whenever their massive silhouettes passed overhead. Villages vanished beneath their sweeping shadows. Great stone castles became nothing more than grand funeral pyres, and ancient forests were transformed into oceans of raging flame, visible from miles away.

You had been forced to watch it all. You had watched her return to you drenched in blood, her eyes gleaming with a manic, unholy satisfaction as flames consumed entire armies. One by one, the people you knew vanished. Some died screaming; some simply disappeared into the smoke. Any remnants of Chaldean personnel vanished during chaotic evacuation attempts that never reached safety. After a while, the names of the casualties began to blur together in your mind. There were simply too many.

Yet, through the mounting horror, there remained one undeniable truth that crushed your chest every single day: This happened because of you.

Every morning you woke up with that thought ringing in your mind. Every night you went to sleep with it burning behind your eyelids. You had given her freedom. You had removed the only tether, the only magical restraint keeping her in check. You were the one who broke the seal. And now, an entire world was paying the price for your naive sentimentality.

The building that served as your prison was beautiful, which was perhaps, another cruel joke to top it all off. It was a massive, sprawling estate overlooking the dead, blackened countryside. It boasted polished marble floors, towering frescoed ceilings, golden chandeliers, and expensive, plush furniture gathered from a dozen ruined noble houses—the kind of place kings would have envied. It was a palace built in the middle of hell.

Outside the windows, the world burned. Inside, there was warmth, food, comfort, and safety. You had everything you could possibly need, except for your freedom.

But it wasn't because Jeanne kept you under lock and key. Quite the opposite, in fact. There were no locks on the doors, no heavy iron chains, and no one stationed outside your bedchamber. The doors

remained wide open. You could walk out whenever you pleased.

The true problem was what waited for you outside. Dragons. Fire. Absolute death and destruction.

The moment you stepped beyond the grounds of the building, you would be dead—not because Jeanne would kill you herself, but because everything else she commanded would. Every dragon in the region recognized your scent. They recognized you as something that belonged explicitly to their Master.

Some left you alone; others merely watched you with low, rumbling growls. But if you wandered too far, if you ventured somewhere Jeanne had not expressly permitted, that supernatural protection became questionable. You knew it. It made your lack of chains feel like a mockery. You weren't restrained by walls; you simply had nowhere left to go.

The place felt especially hollow when Jeanne was away, which was often. On this particular evening, you sat beside one of the enormous glass windows, watching the sun set through a haze of poison. Far away on the horizon, another thick plume of black smoke rose lazily into the sky. Another city. Another battle. Another tragedy. You didn't even bother wondering where it was anymore; the answer hardly mattered.

Your hands clenched tightly against the velvet armrests of your chair, your fingernails digging into the fabric. Useless. That word had become increasingly difficult to ignore. You had tried everything within your power. Everything. You had tried reasoning with her, begging her, arguing until your throat was raw, threatening her with empty promises of retaliation, and crying until your eyes burned.

Nothing worked. Absolutely nothing.

You had shouted at her, called her a monster, called her insane, and accused her of betraying every single thing the two of you had built together over months of shared trials. Jeanne had simply listened to the tirades. Sometimes she looked amused, sometimes mildly annoyed, and sometimes genuinely, quietly thoughtful. Then, she would stand up, leave the room, and burn the world anew.

You remembered one argument in particular from several weeks a

"People are dying!" you had practically screamed, your voice cracking with sheer desperation.

Jeanne had been sitting across from you at the grand dining table, cutting into a piece of roasted meat, completely unfazed by your outburst. "They deserve it," she had replied smoothly.

"Y-you don't care about all the innocent lives?! The ones who have nothing to do with this?!"

"I never claimed to care," she said, taking a slow sip of wine.

"Jeanne!"

She had let out a dramatic, drawn-out sigh, resting her chin against one hand as she looked at you through hooded eyes. "As I've told you before, Master... I dislike humanity."

"That doesn't justify a massacre!"

"No," she had murmured, a small, dark smile touching her lips. "It doesn't."

The casual, chilling indifference of her response had left you entirely speechless. She hadn't tried to defend her actions. She hadn't argued or tried to twist morality to justify the slaughter. She simply acknowledged her evil, as though morality itself had become completely irrelevant to her newfound existence. She no longer needed excuses. And why should she? Who was left to stop her?

The large grandfather clock downstairs chimed the hour, its heavy, rhythmic ticks echoing through the empty halls. You barely reacted. Outside, a massive dragon glided directly overhead, its enormous, shadow covering the courtyard. A distant, guttural roar echoed through the evening air, vibrating through the glass pane.

You just stared at the horizon, at the flickering orange fires of a dying world, staring directly at the consequences of your choices. The sharp, frantic self-loathing you had felt in the first week had long since settled into something quieter, heavier—a permanent, crushing weight pressing down on your chest. You wondered where everyone else was. You wondered if anyone at all remained alive in this ruined timeline, if Chaldea was still frantically searching for you, or if there was even anything left worth saving.

The questions came every single day. The answers never did.

Suddenly, the heavy front doors groaned open downstairs in the main entrance. The unmistakable sound of heavy footsteps echoed up

through the grand marble halls. There was only one person left in the world they could belong to.

Jeanne had returned. And judging by the manic laughter drifting upward through the corridors, her day had apparently gone very well.

You remained perfectly still in your seat by the window. You didn't bother turning around, didn't bother acknowledging her presence, and refused to pretend that any of this was normal. Outside, another distant fire stained the clouds a brilliant, bloody orange. Somewhere beyond those hills, people were screaming, running, and praying to a God that wouldn't answer.

The door behind you slowly creaked open.

Neither of you spoke, not at first. For several long, agonizing moments, the room remained thick with silence. Then, Jeanne let out a casual, exhausted sigh. "There you are."

The absolute normalcy of her voice, the mundane domesticity of it in the face of an apocalypse, snapped something deep inside your psyche.

You spun around so violently the chair nearly toppled over onto the floor. "There I am?!" your voice cracked, pitched high with a volatile mixture of grief and fury. "There I am?!"

Jeanne blinked, her sharp yellow eyes widening slightly in surprise.

But you were already moving, stepping toward her. All the helplessness, the crushing guilt, the terror, and the weeks of watching the world die came rushing out of you all at once like a burst dam.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?!" the profanity exploded from your throat, raw and trembling. "You come back here every single day covered in blood and ash, and you act like everything is normal! Like you didn't just spend the afternoon slaughtering people!"

Jeanne’s expression barely changed, her pale face remaining a mask of cool indifference.

"You've destroyed everything!" you yelled, stepping closer, your hands shaking at your sides. Still, she gave you nothing. "You killed them! All of them!" A small, sharp twitch finally crossed her brow, her jaw tightening. "You killed everyone, Jeanne!"

The room suddenly felt far too small, the high ceilings closing in on you. Your breathing was fast, shallow, and uneven. You could feel hot, angry tears prickling at the corners of your eyes; you hated them, despised your own weakness, and brushed them away fiercely.

You whipped your arm around, pointing a trembling finger toward the glass. "Look at it! Just look at what you're doing!"

Jeanne casually glanced out the window at the burning horizon, then slowly turned her gaze back to you. "I have," she said, her voice terrifyingly calm.

The sheer, unbothered tranquility of her response made your anger spike into pure, blinding rage. "Stop acting like this isn't your fault! Stop acting like a bystander!"

Her eyes narrowed into dangerous, icy slits. "My fault?"

Jeanne slowly crossed her arms over her chestplate, a dark, entirely humorless smile pulling at the corners of her lips. "Oh?" her smile grew wider, sharper, flashing her teeth. "Now we're assigning blame, are we?"

Your stomach dropped into a hollow, freezing void.

"Interesting," she purred, her gaze locking onto you, pinning you to the floor. "Very interesting."

The temperature in the room seemed to plummet. Jeanne took a slow, measured step toward you, her armor clinking softly. "I didn't free myself from your control," she whispered.

You tried to look away, your chest heaving. "Stop."

"I didn't remove the contract," she continued, her voice tracking you as she took another step. The guilt twisted in your gut like a knife. "I didn't decide that the some detestable Witch of all things deserved complete, unbridled freedom."

"Jeanne, stop it..."

She completely ignored your pleading, her smile cutting deeper. "You did. You trusted me. You're the one who thought I was some misunderstood saint, didn’t you?"

"Jeanne—"

"You chose this outcome, Master."

"I SAID STOP!"

The shout ripped from your throat, echoing loudly off the high marble walls.

An oppressive, painful silence immediately followed, heavy enough to drown in. Jeanne stopped walking. She stared down at you, the amusement slowly fading from her face—not completely, but enough to leave her expression cold, sharp, and utterly serious.

When she spoke again, her voice was much quieter, carrying a dangerous weight. "You keep acting like I don't understand, like in stupid."

You let out a bitter, breathless laugh, shaking your head. "Understand? You don't care about—"

"I understand," she interrupted smoothly. Jalter's gaze drifted away from you for a moment, looking out the window at the dying world she had forged. "I understand exactly how much you hate me right now."

The raw bluntness of the statement caught you entirely off guard, choking the air right out of your lungs.

For a moment, neither of you spoke. The wind outside was the only sound.

Then, Jeanne continued, her voice dropping into a low, mocking murmur. "You think I don't notice? You've spent weeks avoiding me like the plague." Her golden eyes snapped back to yours, glittering with a strange, deeply buried resentment. "You barely look at me anymore. You flinch and recoil whenever I get anywhere near you." The words sounded strangely bitter, almost deeply offended, as if she were the one who had been wronged.

You frowned deeply, a surge of incredulous anger overriding your fear. The sheer gall of this monster to feel neglected, to feel upset by your entirely justified avoidance, was mind-boggling. "What do you honestly expect from me, Jeanne?!"

"What do I expect?" A sudden, violent flash of irritation crossed her face. "I expected consistency!"

Jeanne clicked her tongue sharply, stepping close enough that you could feel the heat radiating from her. "You spent months following me around, cornering me in the halls, telling me I wasn't beyond saving! You insisted, day in and day out, that there was more to me than my hatred! You talked to me, you encouraged me, you smiled at me, and you gave me your complete trust!" Her gaze sharpened into lethal points. "And now, suddenly, you can't even stand to be in the same room as me? The moment I do exactly what I was born to do, you look at me like I'm a monster?"

The raw hypocrisy in her mind was staggering. You stared at her, utterly unable to believe the words coming out of her mouth. "People are dead, Jeanne! Hundreds of thousands of them!"

Jeanne's expression hardened into granite. "I know."

"The world is literally ending!"

"I know, dumbass!"

"How can you just stand there and—"

The words died in your throat as Jeanne suddenly moved.

She was fast—far faster than you could track, faster than anything you could ever hope to react to. One moment she was standing several feet away, and in the next fraction of a second, she was directly in your space.

Her gauntleted hand snapped out, violently catching you by the wrist. A sharp jolt of pain shot up your arm, and an involuntary gasp escaped your lips.

The immense, sheer difference in physical strength between a human and a Servant was made immediately clear. You instinctively tried to wrench your arm back, but it was like trying to move a mountain; her grip was unbreakable.

"Jeanne—"

"Enough," the single word cut through the air like a guillotine.

You struggled anyway, driven by pure survival instinct, desperately trying to twist your wrist out of her grasp. It accomplished nothing. Jeanne's grip tightened just a fraction more, but more than enough to ruthlessly remind you of your reality. You were entirely at her mercy.

"You keep doing this," her voice had lost every single trace of its previous humor now, turning flat and cold. "You keep screaming at me."

You tried to pull away again, your boots sliding on the slick marble.

"You keep throwing all the blame onto my shoulders," she whispered, stepping even closer, crowding you until her dark fur collar brushed against your chin. Another attempt to break free, another pathetic failure. "And you keep pretending that you're somehow separate from all of this ruin."

The accusation hit you far harder than the iron grip on your wrist. Your frantic resistance faltered, your muscles going slightly slack as the wind was taken entirely out of your sails.

She noticed the exact moment your spirit broke. Jalter leaned down, her sharp, pale face inches from yours, her eyes blazing with an intense gravity.

"You want honesty, Master? Fine," she hissed, her breath hot against your cheek. "You caused this. You."

Your chest tightened so painfully you could barely breathe.

"You're the one who gave me my freedom," she murmured, her voice softening into a dangerously intimate, terrifying purr. "You're the one who foolishly believed in me."

You looked away, entirely unable to meet her eyes, the tears you had been fighting finally slipping down your cheeks.

Jeanne tilted her head, her grip on your wrist remaining unyielding as she forced you to stand there beneath her shadow. "And now you have the nerve to be shocked that I became exactly what I always told you I was."

The room plunged into a profound, suffocating silence. Your shoulders trembled violently, though whether the tremors were born of anger, grief, or sheer exhaustion, you were no longer entirely sure. The boundary between those emotions had burned away weeks ago.

Eventually, Jeanne released a slow, heavy breath, the sharp snap of irritation gradually draining from her features. It left behind an expression far more complicated, a look that layered cold satisfaction over a strange, twisted tenderness.

She let go of your bruised wrist. But before you could seize the opportunity to stumble backward, her hand slid up, her fingers clamping firmly over your shoulder. She held you in place. It wasn't tight enough to cause pain, but it wasn't gentle either; it was a command disguised as a request, a physical refusal to let you run away from her or from what came next.

"You know what's really pathetic about all of this?" she murmured.

You flinched at the word, your head bowing under the weight of it.

Jeanne's gaze softened slightly, the razor-sharp edge of her malice receded just enough to let you see the raw earnestness beneath. "You still haven't figured it out, have you?"

"What...?" The word barely managed to escape your throat, a raspy, broken sound.

For a long, agonizing moment, Jeanne simply looked at you. Her eyes traced every line of your face, drinking in the anger, the helpless grief, and the agonizing guilt that was eating you alive.

Then, she sighed—a long, drawn-out, genuinely exhausted sound that vibrated through her armor. "As much as you completely and utterly annoy me..." A faint, delicate smile appeared on her lips, devoid of the manic cackling from before. "...I never had any intention of killing you."

Your stomach twisted into a violent, sickening knot. You shook your head blindly. "That doesn't... that doesn't make any of this better, Jeanne."

"I know," she replied instantly, her voice smooth and even.

"Then why?!" you cried out, a desperate, hysterical demand. "Why burn everything?! Why kill everyone if you're just going to keep me alive in a cage?!"

"Because."

Her smile widened, stretching across her face, though there was something entirely sincere beneath it now. It was a look of pure, unadulterated devotion, wrapped in an apocalyptic nightmare, and it somehow made the horror of the burning world a thousand times worse.

"You made a mistake," she whispered.

You stared at her, your breath hitching.

"A catastrophic, unforgivable mistake," she continued, her smile remaining fixed, her amber eyes glittering with dark fondness. "But it was still yours. You are the one who chose to make it."

You shook your head, your mind fracturing as you tried to comprehend the twisted logic. You didn't understand. You couldn't.

Jeanne simply stared, letting out a soft, pitying click of her tongue. "You really are incredibly dense, Master."

Her hand remained heavy on your shoulder, firm and completely unmoving, grounding you to her side. "You freed me," she said, the words coming out surprisingly quietly, almost reverently. "You trusted me when nobody else in the history of this miserable, fabricated existence ever would."

Her eyes drifted away from you for a brief moment, her gaze sweeping back out across the balcony toward the black smoke, the roaring dragons, and the absolute destruction that enveloped everything to the horizon. A quiet huff escaped her nose. "And unfortunately for humanity, that little display of unconditional trust seems to have had some rather severe consequences."

The implication settled over your head once again, heavy and sharp as a guillotine's blade. Your heart sank straight out of your chest, plunging into an abyss of pure despair. "No... t-that's... this isn't what I wanted. This isn't what I meant when I broke the contract!"

Jeanne’s gaze snapped back to you, her smile returning, a little smaller this time, almost comforting. "But it is exactly what happened, isn’t it?"

You felt physically sick, the room spinning around you as the sheer, unmitigated weight of a broken world crashed down entirely on your shoulders. You couldn't live with this. You couldn't wake up to another sunrise stained black by her fires.

"Please..." you whispered, your voice cracking as you looked up at her through a veil of hot tears. "Please, Jeanne... just kill me. Put an end to it. Just burn me like the rest of them."

Her eyes locked onto yours, completely unapologetic and steady. "I

would never kill you," she said. The absolute certainty in her voice was awful. It wasn't because it sounded threatening or malicious. It was because it didn't. It sounded purely, unbreakably honest.

Jeanne's smile widened again, blooming into a bright, almost cheerful expression. And despite everything burning outside the grand estate, despite the mountains of corpses, despite the monsters blotting out the sun, and despite the agonizing end of human history itself—she looked entirely at peace. She looked almost amused.

"Really, Master... I hate to say it again, but this is entirely your fault."

You stared at her, your lips parting, but your voice was entirely gone.

Jeanne merely laughed softly, the sound light and airy, before she shook her head. "As far as I'm concerned..."

Her hand squeezed your shoulder once, the cool metal pressing into your skin in a gesture that was terrifyingly, undeniably affectionate. "...you should stop fighting reality and finally accept that fact."

Outside the glass, the unquenchable fires continued to burn, eating away at the remnants of Europe. The world continued to die a slow, agonizing death. And Jeanne d'Arc Alter looked down at you with the exact same unshakeable certainty she brought to every bloody battlefield she had ever conquered.

"Because you made me love you."

The words hung in the quiet, elegant room, heavy and daunting. They were spoken calmly, a simple matter-of-fact statement, as if they perfectly explained every single tragedy the eye could see. As if that horrific confession somehow made any of this okay.

The world was dead, the sky was black, and dragons ruled the earth.

And it was all because you had loved a monster, and taught her how to love you back.

This is your fault.

Chapter End Notes

> Jalter could like deadass molest me in my room on the storm border like every day and I wouldn’t say shit lwky

End Notes

Jalter please I'm pregnant and it's yours

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